Jeepers mix ruggedness with modern conveniences

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

When it comes to camping, there are generally two types – car campers, who cling to modern conveniences, and backpackers, who sacrifice convenience to reach secluded destinations.

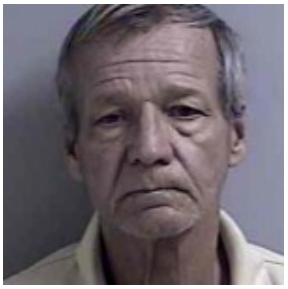
Jeepers insist on having the best of both worlds.

For 61 years, off-road enthusiasts have sandwiched a two-day campout and party at a modest “valley” that was once the home of the Rubicon Mineral Springs Resort between their sometimes-treacherous 7.5-mile treks in and out on one of the world’s most iconic jeep trails.

This year, 543 people paid more the $350 a person to take part in last weekend’s Jeepers Jamboree. While most of the participants were from California, some came as far as Norway to experience the Rubicon Trail.

Read the whole story

S. Tahoe attempted robbery suspect in custody



Robert Allen Larson

A 64-year-old South Lake Tahoe man has been arrested on attempted robbery charges in the aborted heist at El Dorado Savings Bank.

According to officers, Robert Allen Larson confessed that he wrote a note demanding money from a teller, handed it to the employee on July 25, but then took it back.

Larson allegedly said he needed money and that's why he thought of robbing the bank.

Officers said they found incriminating evidence at Larson's house.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

USFS giving tours of river restoration work

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is putting on a field trip Aug. 2 for people to see the work that is being done the Upper Truckee River.

The project will replace the existing stream channel with a new one that is more stable and is connected to the adjacent

floodplain, which will provide a better aquatic habitat, support a healthier meadow ecosystem, and reduce the amount of fine sediment that reaches Lake Tahoe.

Meet on Onnontioga Street, just south of the Omaha Street intersection at 5:30pm. Onnontioga Street is located off of Washoan Boulevard on Pioneer Trail.

Sturdy shoes are recommended.

No RSVP is required.

Staff will be on hand to answer questions and provide information about the project.

Project information may also be found on the LTBMU website.

Doctors not prescribing best meds for back pain

By Nancy Shute, NPR

The misery of low back pain often drives people to the doctor to seek relief. But doctors are doing a pretty miserable job of treating back pain, a study finds.

Physicians are increasingly prescribing expensive scans, narcotic painkillers and other treatments that don’t help in most cases, and can make things a lot worse. Since 1 in 10 of all primary care visits are for low back pain, this is no small matter.

What does help? Some ibuprofen or other over-the-counter painkiller, and maybe some physical therapy. That’s the

evidence-based protocol. With that regimen, most people's back pain goes away within three months.

But when researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston looked at records of 23,918 doctor visits for simple back pain between 1999 and 2010, they found that doctors have actually been getting worse at prescribing scientifically based treatments.

Read the whole story

Mini fasts may help with weight loss

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

This is not a detox diet. Nor is it an extreme version of calorie restriction.

Nope, the strategy of so-called 5-2 diets is to endure two days a week of mini-fasting.

This doesn't mean starving yourself. Rather, it entails reducing your calorie intake during two days of the week down to somewhere in the range of 500 to 1,000 calories.

The idea of intermittent mini-fasting seems to be gaining traction. One version of the diet is being popularized by Michael Mosley, a British physician and journalist who's written a bestselling book called the Fast Diectand produced a documentary.

And there are other popular tomes on the topic. Take for instance, the 5:2 Diet Book, which claims you can boost your

brain power and transform your health by feasting for five days and fasting for two.

Read the whole story

Caesars' earnings less than expected

By Hannah Dreier, AP

LAS VEGAS – Casino operator Caesars Entertainment Corp. posted a smaller loss for its fiscal second quarter on Monday, but results still missed expectations, as slots and tables drew fewer gamblers.

Caesars runs more than 50 casinos, most of them in the U.S. and Britain. This includes Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys in Stateline.

The company saw casino revenue decline by $116.8 million, or 7.5 percent. CEO Gary Loveman said food and beverage sales may ultimately replace those dollars.

"Food and beverage revenues were up very meaningfully in a year when gaming revenues were weak, and we do think that trend is with us for a long time to come," he said during a conference call with analysts and investors. "We have visitors that are coming to Las Vegas principally for nongaming activities, though they may gamble a little while they're here."

Food and beverage revenue was essentially flat overall for the quarter, but rose 8.9 percent in Las Vegas, where gambling revenue was down 15.5 percent.

Caesars attributed the drop in gambling income to fewer patrons. The company also pointed to increased competition in regional markets, as states open the door to commercial gambling, and the elimination of some less profitable marketing strategies.

Loveman, a former Harvard professor, has made a name for himself with innovative loyalty programs that encourage customers to keep coming back. But casino patrons, especially younger ones, are increasingly turning away from gambling, and Las Vegas moguls are attempting to make up the difference with lavish nightclubs, decadent restaurants and boutique hotels.

Caesars said that its net loss for the three months ended June 30 shrank 12 percent, to $212.2 million, or $1.69 per share, from $241.7 million, or $1.93 a share, last year. Revenue edged down to $2.16 billion, from $2.16 billion in the 2012 second quarter.

Analysts had expected a smaller loss of $1.40 per share on higher revenue of $2.18 billion, according to FactSet.

Caesars is the largest operator of casinos in the U.S.

Astronomy night in Washoe Valley

Astronomy experts Jay Lawson and Adam Kremers will set up their high-powered telescopes to view Saturn, the Milky Way galaxy and many other objects in the night sky.

The Aug. 10 event is at Washoe Lake State Park from 8-10:30pm.

Meet at the overflow boat parking area which is next to the

group reservation area. Washoe Lake State Park is five miles north of Carson City.

There is no charge for the program, but there is a $7 per-vehicle entry fee.

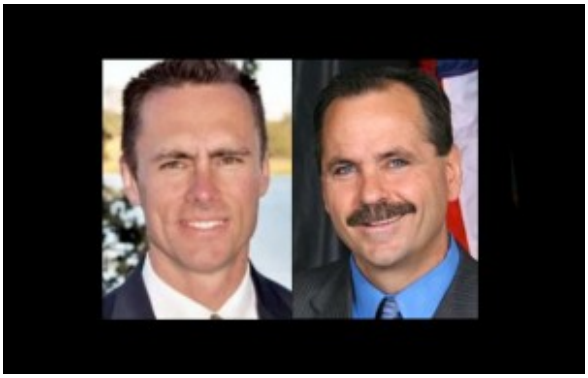
S. Tahoe extends deadline for photo contest

South Lake Tahoe Community Services Department is extending the deadline for the "Parks Make Life Better" photo contest until Aug. 10.

Photo submissions are to include yourself, family or friends enjoying a recreation activity in South Lake Tahoe such as Bijou Park, Regan Beach, Lakeview Commons, STAR Camp, youth or adult sport program or favorite recreation center class.

For more information, go online or call (530) 542.6056.

El Dorado's Pierson, Nutting escalate distrust



El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson and county Supervisor Ray Nutting have long been adversaries.

By Kathryn Reed

Two El Dorado County elected officials are accusing the other of improprieties in their respective offices.

District Attorney Vern Pierson says Supervisor Ray Nutting may have more conflicts of interest than what a grand jury indicted him on. Nutting believes Pierson is on a witch-hunt and is wasting taxpayer money in a vendetta that goes back several years between the two men.

Pierson sent a letter July 29 to board Chairman Ron Briggs that was copied to all supervisors except Nutting. It was sent to Nutting's attorney. It also went to county counsel and the chief administrative officer.

In it Pierson says, "Last week our office discovered that District II Supervisor Nutting applied to be certified for Public Housing (Section 8), Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) as a landlord for property he owns in El Dorado County. On August 31, 2010, county staff correctly rejected his request due to a statutory conflict of interest: As a supervisor he also sits on the Public Housing Authority, and the federal regulations state that no member of the PHA is eligible to receive Section 8 funds as a landlord. (24 CFR

982.161).”

Nutting told *Lake Tahoe News* he is being criticized for looking into whether he could have a tenant at his Grizzly Flats rental who qualified for Section 8 housing. He said he was told he couldn’t have such a renter because of being on the Board of Supervisors and added that he has never had such a tenant.

“His actions speak for himself. He blurts things out and doesn’t think about what he is doing,” Nutting said of Pierson. “He is criticizing me for looking into it.”

Nutting further told *Lake Tahoe News*, “Again, he is abusing his office. I did all the right things. He blatantly wastes taxpayer money. It is unbelievable.”

Pierson was not available for comment. However, a reason for writing the letter is contained in the document: “I am expressing my concern so that you can take the actions you consider appropriate. … Given the pending charges and this new information and Supervisor Nutting’s seemingly cavalier attitude toward conflicts of interest, I felt an obligation to advise the board.”

The letter goes on to say, “Further, records indicate, unlike an ordinary property owner, Supervisor Nutting used his position to appeal this denial to the then Director of H.H.S. who serves at the will of this board. Supervisor Nutting then, on county official letterhead, apparently desperate to secure this rental income ($1,400 for a detached residence in Grizzly Flats), sent a letter to the regional H.U.D. Director seeking a waiver of an obvious conflict of interest. It appears this waiver was never granted under federal law; even if it had been, there is no such waiver of Section 1090 violations under state law.”

After seeing Pierson’s letter, Nutting emailed *Lake Tahoe News*, “I read the letter. I should be praised for asking the

question for the single mom with children. I received the answer and that is the way it should work. I did everything right!”

Nutting is being prosecuted by Pierson as well as the state Attorney General’s Office.

Book publisher wants stories about national parks

Bona Fide Books is seeking literary essays for a collection about life and work in U.S. national parks.

In Volume 1 were tales of grizzly encounters and streaking through Denali, personal relationships with temperamental elk and the dirty truth behind housekeeping in Yellowstone. Now, the Meyers publishing house wants stories from parks east of the Mississippi, from Acadia to the Everglades, from the Smokies to Shenandoah. Contributors must have lived or worked in the parks.

Each writer will receive $100 for their essay and one copy of the collection.

Submissions will be accepted through Sept. 1. Submit via email to submissions@bonafidebooks.com.